

Serial No.: 09/763,678
Response to Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment
Reply to Notice dated March 15, 2004

Attorney Docket No.: 18872.0102

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-93 (cancelled).

94. (New) A polymer feedstock in the form of a cold-pressed tablet or pellet for use in extrusion of an extruded product containing PVA, the cold-pressed tablet or pellet comprising, by weight, a blend of:
- 40 to 70% PVA;
 - 8 to 15% plasticizer;
 - 0.5 to 1.5% internal lubricant;
 - 0.0001 to 0.1% external lubricant; and
 - a filler.
95. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 wherein the internal lubricant comprises a fatty acid amide.
96. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 95 wherein the fatty acid amide is a straight or branched C₁₂-C₂₄ fatty acid amide.
97. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 wherein the plasticiser is selected from the group consisting of ethylene glycol, glycerol, triethylene glycol, low molecular weight polyethylene glycols and C₂-C₈ amides.
98. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 wherein the filler comprises inert, inorganic material.

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99. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 wherein the filler comprises a superabsorbent material.
100. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 wherein the filler comprises both an inert, inorganic material and superabsorbent material.
101. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 98 wherein the inorganic filler comprises calcium carbonate.
102. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 comprising, by weight, up to 50% filler.
103. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 wherein the external lubricant comprises a stearate.
104. (New) A PVA-containing polymer feedstock in the form of a cold-pressed tablet or pellet comprising, by weight:-
40 to 80% PVA;
5 to 50% filler;
5 to 15% plasticizer; and
0.5 to 2.5% internal lubricant.
105. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 104, comprising, by weight:-
40 to 70% PVA;
20 to 50% filler;
8 to 15% plasticizer;
0.5 to 1.5% internal lubricant; and
0.0001 to 0.1% external lubricant.

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106. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 104, wherein a fatty acid amide is provided as internal lubricant.
107. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 105 wherein stearate is provided as external lubricant.
108. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 105 comprising, by weight:-
50 to 60% PVA ;
30 to 40% stearate-coated calcium carbonate;
8 to 15% glycerol;
0.5 to 1.5% octadecanamide; and
0.0001 to 0.1% zinc stearate.
109. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 prepared substantially without melting of the PVA.
110. (New) A polymer feedstock according to claim 94 having a moisture content less than about 10% by weight but greater than 0.01% to bind the pellets or tablets.
111. (New) A method of making a PVA-containing polymer feedstock according to claim 94 comprising blending the PVA with the plasticizer, the internal lubricant, the external lubricant and the filler, said internal lubricant including a fatty acid amide, in the presence of an amount of moisture sufficient to bind the polymer feedstock into tablets or pellets upon cold pressing and cold pressing the feedstock into tablets or pellets.
112. (New) A method according to claim 111 comprising blending, in a high speed blender, the PVA and the internal lubricant.

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113. (New) A method according to claim 111 comprising adding moisture to the components to be blended.

114. (New) A method according to claim 111 wherein PVA and lubricant are fed into a high speed mixer gravimetrically.

115. (New) A method of making a PVA-containing polymer feedstock according to claim 111, wherein the filler comprises a superabsorbent material.

116. (New) A method of extruding a PVA-containing polymer feedstock comprising forming a feedstock according to claim 94 and extruding the feedstock into a product, wherein the feedstock is prepared substantially without melting of the PVA.